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Administration of
GRAZING DISTRICTS

by J. RUSSELL PENNY
and MARION CLAWSON

Range Conservationist and Director, respectively
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

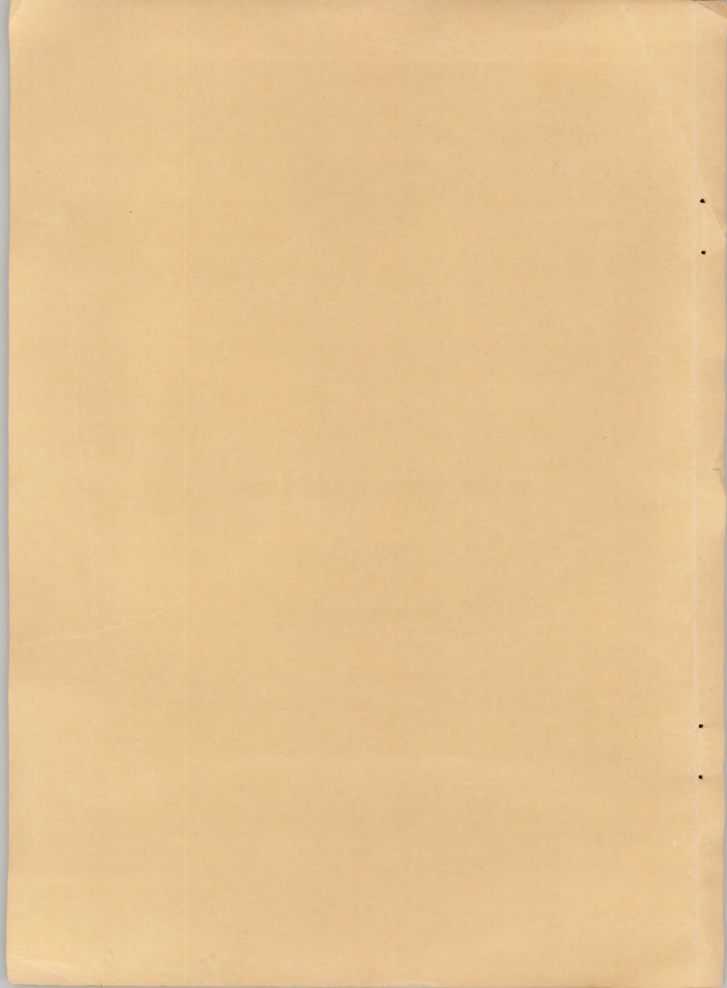
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Administration of Grazing Districts

By J. RUSSELL PENNY and MARION CLAWSON*

THE grazing district is the largest type of land administration unit in the United States. More than 160 million acres, including federal and private lands administered under agreement, are covered by grazing districts.¹ These lands make up an integral part of the total resources and economy of the ten western states. In spite of the national importance of grazing districts, little has been written of their formation, organization, and functions. A brief historical summary will help to bring the subject into proper focus.

History of Grazing Districts

Grazing by domestic livestock on the western range lands, other than the Spanish settlements, began with the famous Texas trail herds that brought hundreds of thousands of cattle into the Great Plains area between 1865 and 1890. Around 1870 the large cattle ranches were established. By 1890 most of the open range was in full use by domestic livestock. The coming of the railroads in the early 1880's brought an influx of settlers that continued until the first World War. The open range was homesteaded rapidly and cattlemen were crowded to the point of resisting encroachment by force. With the homesteader came fencing and the wide open spaces were gone forever.

The cattlemen sought to control the range by acquiring the limited areas of meadow land and the better watering places. Competition was intensified with the coming of the sheepman who

also acquired strategic footholds by "corraling" the water, and in some areas by acquiring portions of railroad land grants made up of alternate sections of land. The notorious sheep and cattle wars resulted.

Control of the range by ownership or control of strategic lands was successful only to a relatively minor degree. The philosophy became "first come, first served." This cut-throat competitive type of grazing had a decidedly detrimental effect on the forage and land. Forage plants, under extreme heavy use, became weakened and the better plants, destroyed. In some areas vegetation became so sparse that serious erosion problems arose. Many of the stockmen knew the folly of this system of grazing but were helpless to correct it.

The need for control was recognized early. The Public Land Commission in 1880 suggested that land valuable chiefly for grazing be disposed of in blocks large enough to support ranches of 2,560 acres. In 1905 the Commission suggested the creation of federal grazing districts. When this failed, many important range areas were set up as national forests, the primary administrative function of which was to control grazing. In an attempt to place grazing lands under private ownership, several special homestead acts were passed between 1904 and 1916 bringing approximately 100 million acres under private ownership.

Stockmen were much divided as to whether there should be state or federal control or whether the public domain should go into private ownership. Some even wanted the status quo. They were generally unified in one basic respect; that was to obtain stability in the live-

* Range Conservationist and Director, respectively, Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior.

¹ Report of the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, Statistical Appendix (Washington: U. S. Department of the Interior 1951), Tables 4, 10, pp. 6, 12.

stock industry. They wanted forage to be protected from trespass. By the late 1920's agitation for federal control became stronger and many bills were introduced through the early 1930's. A special Act of Congress in 1928 provided for the creation of the cooperative Mizpah-Pumpkin Creek Grazing District in Montana. Rivalry sprang up between the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture as to which should have jurisdiction over the public lands. The question was settled June 28, 1934, by passage of the Taylor Grazing Act, providing for administrative control of the public domain under the Department of the Interior and the creation of grazing districts.²

Taylor Act Opens New Era

To quote the President's statement on approval of the Taylor Grazing Act:

"It confers broad powers on the Secretary of the Interior to do all things necessary for the preservation of these ranges, including, amongst other powers, the right to specify from time to time the number of livestock which may graze within such districts and the seasons when they shall be permitted to do so. The authority to exercise these powers is carefully safeguarded against impairment by state or local action. Creation of a grazing district by the Secretary of the Interior and promulgation of rules and regulations respecting it will supersede State regulations of grazing on that part of the public domain included within such districts."³

For the first time in American land history, comprehensive and general authority was given for classification of land according to its highest and best use and for rejection of applications for other uses. Homesteading was still allowed for entries up to 320 acres of land considered most valuable or suitable for agricultural crops.

Authority to make land exchanges with states and private individuals was provided, the primary purpose being to consolidate federal lands into more compact blocks. The Act also provided for transfer of lands from grazing districts to national forests, and vice versa, when more effective administrative boundaries would result and for sale of isolated or disconnected tracts up to 1,520 acres and un-isolated tracts, mountainous or too rough for cultivation, up to 760 acres. Conservation and propagation of wildlife with the right to hunt and fish legally within the grazing districts was preserved. Provisions were made also for programs on erosion and flood control, water development, and general improvement of the lands. The Taylor Grazing Act was in fact a multiple-use act.⁴

Regarding grazing, the Act provided for the establishment of grazing districts and for issuance of leases in areas not suitable for district administration. This article is concerned chiefly with the administration of the federal range within districts where permits can be granted for periods up to a maximum of 10 years.⁵

Provision was made for local hearings on appeals from the decisions of the administrative officer in charge of grazing districts. The charging of reasonable grazing fees was authorized. Fifty percent of such fees were to be returned to the state in which they were earned, to be used as prescribed by the state legislature; 25 percent of the fees were to be used for range improvement purposes, and 25 percent were to remain in the United States Treasury. This distribution of fees was changed somewhat in 1947, when separate grazing fees and

² Marion Clawson, *Uncle Sam's Acres* (New York: Dodd Mead & Co., 1951), pp. 111-117.

³ Taylor Grazing Act Statement of the President on Approval of the Act (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1934), preface.

⁴ J. A. Krug and Marion Clawson, *The Federal Range Code for Grazing Districts, Revised in October 1, 1949*. (Washington: USDI, Bureau of Land Management, 1949), pp. 8, 9.

⁵ Reference for regulations regarding grazing leases: Title 43, *Code of Federal Regulations* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1949), Part 160, pp. 240-245.

range improvement fees were provided with 12½ percent of the grazing fees to be returned to the states, and 87½ percent to remain in the United States Treasury. All of the range improvement fee is made available by appropriation for construction and maintenance of range improvements.⁶

To provide for placing the remaining public lands into their best use and prevent a rush of land settlement entries before provisions of the Act could be made effective, all lands were withdrawn from entry (Executive Orders 6910, November 26, 1934, and 6964, February 5, 1935). Amendments to the general orders were made from May 1935 through May 1936, permitting, among other uses, entries for land sales, land exchanges, and leasing for grazing use of lands outside of grazing districts.⁷

General meetings were held throughout the west by representatives of the Department of the Interior to explain the provisions of the Taylor Grazing Act to the stockmen. Shortly thereafter, as provided by the Act, and before grazing districts were formed, a public hearing was announced in the state to consider establishment of grazing districts. Publication of such notice had the effect of withdrawing all public lands within the exterior boundaries of such proposed grazing districts from all forms of entry or settlement.

Farrington R. Carpenter was appointed by the Secretary of the Interior to administer the law. A separate division in the Office of the Secretary, the Division of Grazing Control (later to become the Grazing Service and then the Division of Range Management in the Bureau of Land Management), was formed. The

new organization was originally staffed with 17 men drawn from the Geological Survey, General Land Office and Forest Service. In January 1936 the organization was expanded through selection of persons from civil service rolls. An early fear among the livestock men that the organization might be composed of men lacking practical understanding of the range industry was offset by an amendment to the Act, in 1936, requiring that prior to appointment, the administrative personnel must have at least one year's residence in the state or states in which they were to serve and that consideration be given to practical range experience.⁸

State-wide hearings were held and committees were designated by the stockmen to recommend areas in that state which should be included within grazing districts and where the district boundaries should be. The areas recommended by these state committees, far exceeding the original 80-million-acre limitation, indicated the strong sentiment in favor of grazing control and led to the increase to 142 million acres by amendment to the Taylor Grazing Act in 1936. What districts should be established under the limitation was then determined, followed by the preparation and issuance of Executive Orders establishing 37 grazing districts.⁹

Advisory Boards; A "Grass Roots Council"

Immediately after the grazing districts were formed, one of the most significant aspects of the administration was put into effect—the election of advisory boards. The Department, recognizing the advantage of local knowledge and experience, had proposed advisory boards elected by the stockmen themselves. These boards proved to be such an asset to the functioning of grazing districts

⁶ J. A. Krug and Marion Clawson, *The Taylor Grazing Act of June 28, 1934 with Amendments to October 1, 1949* (Washington: USDI, Bureau of Land Management, 1949), Section 10, p. 7.

⁷ Title 43, *Code of Federal Regulations* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1949), Sec. 297.11-18, pp. 660-662.

⁸ The Taylor Grazing Act, *op. cit.*, Sec. 17, p. 10.

⁹ Title 43, *Code of Federal Regulations* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1940), Sec. 502.1, pp. 19-22.

that the Act was amended in 1939, giving advisory boards legal recognition and permanent status. The Act specifically provided that advisory boards include five to twelve members to be elected by the stockmen with an additional member to be appointed by the Secretary of the Interior to represent wildlife interests in the district. These boards were granted advisory powers only and could be, and sometimes were, and are overruled by administrative officials.¹⁰

Advisory board members in 1940 were organized into a National Advisory Board Council to consider and make recommendations on grazing administration and problems of a national scope. Shortly thereafter state advisory boards were formed in several of the states. An amendment to the Federal Range Code for Grazing Districts in 1949 officially provided for state advisory boards and the National Advisory Board Council.¹¹

Development of a Range Code

The consideration of applications for grazing privileges was the first act of grazing district administration. Throughout all districts the demand generally far exceeded the forage supply. To apportion the available range so that each user would get his proportionate share of forage and could use it in keeping with principles of good range management was a primary goal. Temporary rules were replaced in 1938, with the Federal Range Code approved by the Secretary of the Interior, which set forth in detail regulations governing the administration.

Possession of sufficient privately-owned or controlled base property, land or water, to insure a year-round operation for the permitted livestock, was required of all users. In areas where private land

is the backbone of ranching operations, land was considered as the base property. In such areas the permitted livestock was required to spend a specified amount of time on the private land being offered as a basis for securing grazing privileges. However, in the arid southwestern United States water is considered the principal basis for receiving grazing privileges. Applicants there were required to have privately-owned or controlled water suitable for consumption by livestock and available, accessible, and adequate during those months for which the range was classified as suitable for use.

Preference for grazing privileges was given operators who made substantial grazing use of the public lands in connection with their private properties for two consecutive years or any three years in the five years preceding the Taylor Grazing Act (known as the "priority period," June 28, 1929 to June 28, 1934). For districts established or for additions to districts after June 28, 1938, the priority period for land base property is the five years immediately preceding the date of the order establishing them. This provision was extended to water base property on March 16, 1942. Thus grazing privileges were attached to the land rather than to the individual or the livestock.¹² By later amendment provision was made for the transfer of grazing privileges from one property to another.

The amount of available forage to be apportioned was at first estimated very largely upon the knowledge and advice of advisory boards. These estimates, although often too liberal, in a surprising number of cases were in accord with detailed range surveys and studies made later. They were altered or supported according to those findings.

¹⁰ *The Federal Range Code*—, *op. cit.*, Sec. 161.12 (a)-(i), pp. 27-31.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Sec. 161.12 (j)-(l), p. 31.

¹² *The Federal Range Code, Approved: August 31, 1938, With Amendments Approved, September 18, 1939, December 5, 1940, February 26, 1941* (Washington: USDI, Grazing Service, 1941), Sec. 2 (9), (L) pp. 2-4.

Advisory board meetings are held at least annually with the grazing district officers, to recommend action on grazing applications. Applications of advisory board members are acted upon by the administrative officer (formerly grazier, now range manager). Base properties are classified according to provisions of the Federal Range Code.

Grazing permittees are afforded an opportunity to protest adverse action on their grazing applications at a protest meeting before the advisory board and the range manager. If the action on the protest is adverse they may file an appeal requesting a hearing before an examiner. They have right of appeal from the examiner's decision to the Director of the Bureau of Land Management and from the Director to the Secretary of the Interior.¹³

Temporary one-year grazing privileges only were authorized at first. Few reductions in livestock using the federal range were made during the first grazing season. The policy was to advise the operators of future reductions and allow an interval of time for them to make necessary adjustments. As information regarding the grazing capacity of the federal range and the character and amount of base property became substantiated and livestock operations became stabilized through the institution of proper range management practices, term permits for periods up to ten years were issued. These term permits were in conformity with the Taylor Grazing Act and the rules and regulations in the Federal Range Code.

Permits are subject to cancellation at any time because of: (1) non-compliance of the permittee with rules and regulations; (2) loss of control by the permittee of all or a part of the property on which a permit is based; (3) failure of the permittee to demonstrate that actual

commensurate rating of the base property upon which it is based is equal to the estimated rating at the time of the issuance of the permit; (4) permittee's failure to make substantial use of the base property; or (5) diminution of forage because of withdrawal of classification of the land for a higher use.

Applications are taken each year during the term of the permit for the annual use that will be made of the federal range.¹⁴ Free use permits are issued to applicants for livestock kept for domestic purposes.

General rules of the range are prescribed in the Federal Range Code prohibiting the unauthorized (1) use of the federal range or stockdriveways; (2) construction or maintenance of range improvements; (3) cutting, burning or removal of vegetation, or the abuse of federal property in any way. Range users must also comply with prescribed rules to bring about better range practices, including those pertaining to branding, trailing, salting, establishment of bed grounds, and the breed, grade, number, and time of turn-out for bulls. Provisions of the state law apply to the latter in the absence of expressed requirements by the Bureau.¹⁵

Alleged violators of provisions of the Act or the Code are served with written notice. If the violation consists of unlawful grazing of livestock the notice orders the alleged violator to remove the livestock by a specified time. If the terms of the notice are not followed, legal action may be taken or the livestock may be impounded. Usually the alleged violator complies with the notice and makes an offer of settlement for the damages to the federal range or other property. If the offer of settlement is accepted it constitutes satisfaction of

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Sec. 161.6(c), pp. 8-10.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Sec. 161.10, pp. 23, 24

¹³ *The Federal Range Code, 1949, op. cit.*, Sec. 161.9, pp. 16-22.

civil liability. Where grazing permittees are involved in cases of clearly-established flagrant or repeated violations, disciplinary action may be taken by reducing, revoking, or denying the renewal of a license or permit. Before such action is taken, however, the violator is cited before an examiner of the Bureau of Land Management. As in other forms of appeal, the accused may appeal from the decision of the examiner to the Director and finally to the Secretary of the Interior. Violations by nonpermittees are handled through direct action in the federal court.¹⁶

Grazing privileges within grazing districts have the distinction of being tied to dependent base property.¹⁷ The transferring of these privileges under Bureau of Land Management administration is unique. Operators owning properties without privileges benefit by acquiring privileges through transfer from other properties. Livestock operations may be stabilized by transferring privileges from leased to owned lands or from relatively unproductive to highly productive lands.¹⁸

Range Improvements

When the Taylor Grazing Act was passed, and the situation is by no means corrected yet, vast areas of the federal range were inaccessible to livestock because of the lack of water. Considerable overgrazing occurred due to congestion of livestock around existing water holes. To alleviate these conditions, stockwater reservoirs, wells, and springs were and are being developed, fences and stock trails constructed, and salt grounds established.

"Last of the Herd," that famous early-day painting by C. M. Russell, eloquently portrays the hazards of winter grazing. Truck trail construction made extensive

areas of these winter ranges more accessible for range supervision and handling of supplementary feeds. To assist in healing old erosion scars, prevent new ones, and to increase and improve the forage supply, a program of reseedling was inaugurated on areas of denuded or reduced vegetative cover where conditions of soil and moisture were favorable.

The construction of the range improvements follows a District Range Improvement Plan developed by the range manager in consultation with the advisory board and permittees. Work is done for the most part by contract.

Licensees and permittees now pay a grazing fee of ten cents and a range improvement fee of two cents per animal-unit month.¹⁹ (An animal-unit month is the grazing equivalent per month of one cow or horse, or five sheep or goats.) Exceptions are made in some instances where higher fees are charged on lands administered by agreement.

The range improvement fees are used to construct and maintain the various types of developments required to rehabilitate the federal range and promote its proper use by livestock. These range improvement fees have been augmented to a very considerable extent by contributions from the licensees and permittees in the form of money, materials and labor. This cooperative policy has proved beneficial for at least three reasons: (1) with a financial investment in the improvement project, the range-user takes a more active interest and makes more careful use of the improvements; (2) financial participation by range-users further assures the desirability of the project; and (3) with added funds the improvement program may be carried forth more rapidly. Title to the cooperative improvements goes to the United States Government. Should the cooperator's

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Sec. 161.11, pp. 24-27.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Sec. 161.4, p. 6.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Sec. 161.7, pp. 12, 13.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Sec. 161.8, pp. 13-15.

use of the project be taken over by another range-user the cooperator may be reimbursed by the new user to the extent of his invested share in the project. Should the project be abandoned, the salvaged materials revert to the parties of interest in proportion to their invested shares.

Another substantial share of range rehabilitation has resulted from range improvement projects constructed entirely by the licensees and permittees under Section 4 of the Act. Such permits are not granted if the project does not further the Bureau's plans for range rehabilitation or range management. Title to such range improvements goes to the permittee.

Fire Control

To cope with the menace of fire, the range manager each year prepares a comprehensive district fire plan. The plan lays out the locations and availability of personnel and equipment and the general system of operation. The core of the plan is a system of per diem guards, most of whom are stockmen-users of the range. Fire fighting tools are stored in strategically located caches and the per diem guard is authorized to recruit and hire fire fighters. In the event of large fires, district personnel supervise, calling on the cooperative services of other agencies, private individuals, and equipment contractors.

For those grazing districts embracing exceedingly high fire hazard areas, such as the cheat grass ranges of South Idaho, the per diem guard system is augmented by a full-time fire fighting organization maintained during the fire season. This organization generally includes a district fire supervisor with an emergency fire crew of temporary wage employees. A continuously-manned short wave radio system is the principal means of communication. Scouting and patrolling of

fires is done largely by contracted plan service.

Multiple Use of Public Lands

Rarely, if ever, is any part of the public lands within grazing districts used solely for grazing by livestock. These lands in addition to supplying forage for domestic livestock, graze big game animals, furnish nesting places and general habitat for upland game birds and ducks, and provide fishing, hunting and other forms of recreation. The growing of timber and watershed protection are other important uses. The range manager attempts to balance uses to secure the most desirable combination. Generally multiple uses do not conflict appreciably; however, where uses are not compatible, the most beneficial use or uses, e.g. watershed protection, is determined and the land managed accordingly.³⁰

These many uses of public lands are accompanied with a diversity of associated programs, including soil and moisture conservation, land classification, and forestry, each a highly specialized field of its own. Local administrative responsibility for these activities within grazing districts is delegated to the district range manager. In reality he is an area manager. He is the official agent of the federal government for all activities associated with the public lands within the grazing district and on surrounding scattered public lands under his jurisdiction.

Associated Programs of Grazing Districts

The program of soil and moisture conservation in grazing districts and other Bureau-administered lands in the United States is a continuing activity authorized by the National Soil Conservation Act of 1935 (49 Stat. 163). Until 1940, all soil conservation activities under this

³⁰ Marion Clawson, *op. cit.*, pp. 4, 230.

Act, regardless of land ownership, were administered by the Soil Conservation Service of the Department of Agriculture. On April 11, 1940, the President's Reorganization Plan No. 4 provided that all such activities pertaining to public domain lands under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior should be transferred to that Department. Where such activities are essential to rehabilitation of the public lands, soil and moisture conservation work may also be carried on by the Bureau on private lands with the consent of the owners.

Conservation planning and operations of the Soil and Moisture Conservation program are organized on the basis of project areas. These are areas on which rehabilitation and conservation treatment is necessary for the reduction and prevention of critical erosion and the wastage of water resources. Management and operational plans for each area must be prepared and approved before project work may be initiated.

Major techniques used in the soil and moisture program to control erosion consist of range revegetation; construction of diversion and silt detention dams; developing flood irrigation of otherwise dry lands; development of stock watering places providing for better livestock distribution; and the construction of fences also for better livestock distribution and to protect newly reseeded areas.²¹

Effective cooperation from the range users is also an important aspect of the soil and moisture program, since these conservation practices are as much in the interest of the user as of the government. This interest is evidenced by extensive financial contributions by the range-users.

Public lands within grazing districts which have more valuable uses than for

grazing may be opened for disposition, settlement, or occupation. First, however, the lands must be examined and classified according to their proper use. If so classified, the lands may then be opened for agricultural homestead entries, exchanges by state or private individuals, sale of isolated tracts under 1,520 acres or un-isolated rough or mountainous tracts under 760 acres, lease or sale of tracts not exceeding five acres for special uses, permits for rights-of-way and oil and gas leases, etc.²²

Examination and classification may be done by either the area classification method or the case method. By the area classification method large blocks of land are examined and classified in one operation. Detailed physical and economic information is assembled to determine the suitability of these public lands for their various uses. From this survey detailed plans are formed and an action program inaugurated. The public land to be disposed of to private individuals is opened for appropriate land entry. Lands that should be more logically included under state administration or that of another federal agency are so transferred. When an individual applies for a land entry in an area not covered by the area classification method, an examination and classification report is made for that individual tract.

Forestry is a significant part of the resource management program. Tree growth in generally sparsely-timbered areas is highly valued, especially as a source of forest products for local use, for watershed protection, as scenery, and as an adjunct to recreation. Some of the grazing districts possess sizeable stands of merchantable timber. Responsibility for sustained yield management of the timber stands rests with range managers.

²¹ *Soil and Moisture Operations, A pamphlet* (Washington: USDI, Bureau of Land Management).

²² *The Taylor Grazing Act, 1940, op. cit.*, Sections 7, 8, 15 pp. 4-6, and 9.

Prior to 1947, except for an emergency war time Act, there was no statutory authority for the sale of green timber on unreserved, vacant, public lands. Free use permits were allowed under the Act of June 3, 1878, and various other free use laws for house logs, poles, posts or fire wood for domestic use. The Materials Act of July 31, 1947 (61 Stat. 681; 43 USC 1185 to 1187) authorized the sale of timber or other forest products, as well as other materials, from these lands.

Timber to be sold is cruised, marked, and removed in accordance with approved silvicultural practices for sustained-yield and sold at not less than the appraised value. When the appraised value of the timber or other material to be sold is \$1000 or less, it may be sold without competitive bidding. Sales involving more than an appraised value or \$1000 may be made only to the highest qualified bidder at public auction or under sealed bid.²³

Free use permits for poles, posts and firewood are still authorized for domestic use. Green trees of sawtimber size may be disposed of under free use permits only when such disposal is in the interest of the government. Free use permits may be issued to federal or state agencies, including municipalities, without limitation as to number of permits or value, provided such materials will be used for public projects.

Coordination with Other Federal, State, and Local Agencies

Administration of Bureau of Land Management grazing districts by virtue of the multiplicity of uses of the public lands has a close relationship to numerous other federal, state, and local programs. Many grazing districts adjoin National Forests, Indian Reservations, Military

Reservations, and Land Utilization Projects. Users of the Bureau of Land Management grazing districts frequently also have grazing privileges on one or more of these administratively different areas as well as on intermingled state and private lands. Problems of inter-agency coordination arise as to when the livestock may be allowed on and off these various areas so as to eliminate duplication of time of grazing use by the same animals or to fill gaps in the grazing season. Trailing schedules and routes of trailing must be considered with livestock crossing the lands of one agency to that of another.

Grazing district plans for soil and moisture rehabilitation and conservation must be coordinated with those of other land management and resource development agencies operating in the areas affected. This need for coordination is especially significant since the problem of rehabilitation and conservation is most effectively attacked on a watershed basis. These watersheds frequently contain many different types of administrative areas upon any one of which may depend the success of the project. Furthermore, these plans must be coordinated with other land and water resource development plans, taking into consideration off-site or down-stream benefits.

Within many grazing districts state soil conservation districts have been formed. Cooperative agreements between the Bureau of Land Management and many of these districts have brought joint action on common problems.

The work of the Bureau of Land Management and the Bureau of Reclamation is closely related in many aspects. The watershed significance of public lands, and particularly the siltation problem as related to reclamation development, is a common one. In some areas crop land now serving as base

²³ Title 43, 1949, *op. cit.*, Part 259, as revised in Circular 1758 and published in Federal Register Vol. 15, No. 122 of June 24, 1950.

property for grazing privileges on the federal range has been or may be flooded by reclamation storage reservoirs. When this is the case it is necessary to determine what adjustments should be made. When public domain lands are withdrawn for reclamation purposes the Bureau of Land Management may, with agreement of the Bureau of Reclamation, continue administration of the grazing resources until the lands are required for the development of the reclamation program.

Wildlife management plans within grazing districts are concerned chiefly with the amount of suitable forage to be reserved for game animals during proper seasons of year in the right habitat. Since these game animals roam at will they in a sense come under the administrative jurisdiction of many persons. Various federal and state land management agencies and private individuals supply them with forage which must be properly managed; on the other hand, the states regulate harvesting of the animals. These two interests must be coordinated. Proper balance between the uses of wildlife and domestic livestock and other uses must also be solved.

Protection of forage and timber resources from fire is another program closely related to those of other agencies. Cooperative agreements are made with other federal and state agencies, counties, municipalities and private concerns having fire organizations operating on adjacent lands. These agreements usually provide for the mutual use of equipment and personnel.

The impact of grazing district administration on the local and national economy is best shown by a summary of grazing district accomplishments.

Summary of Accomplishments

Within grazing districts approximately 20,000 livestock operators graze annually

approximately 8¼ million head of livestock securing 14½ million animal unit months of forage from grazing district lands.¹⁴ This forage is now being obtained without the "cut-throat" competition of pre-Taylor Act days. Responsibility for this favorable change is due to adjustments in the amount of use and the establishment of individual and group allotments for which grazing periods and numbers and class of livestock have been specified. These improved range management practices have spurred the remarkable recovery of weakened and depleted forage resources. Long-term permits have been issued to over 50 percent of the range-users.

A more dependable forage supply on public lands together with a required adequate base of operations has assisted greatly in creating stability of livestock operations dependent upon the federal range.

Range Improvement and Soil and Moisture Conservation Programs have been particularly successful in developing the public lands so that livestock are now making more efficient and conservative use of them; scars of past abuses have been and are being healed and new ones prevented. These programs have also been successful in providing additional forage by opening grazing areas which heretofore were inaccessible to livestock, and by increasing the quantity and quality of forage plants by water spreading, reseeding, etc. As a result, the necessity for a severe reduction in grazing has been eliminated or materially lessened. In some local areas an increase in livestock has been possible. Following is a tabulation of the principal type of development projects the Bureau of Land Management has placed on the federal range since 1935:

¹⁴ *Report of the Director of the Bureau of Land Management 1951, op. cit., Tables 75, 76, pp. 96, 97.*

PRINCIPAL RANGE REHABILITATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS 1935 THROUGH 1951
(FISCAL YEARS)

Livestock Watering Places...	9,273 each
Dam, Soil and Moisture Conservation.....	1,088 each
Fencing.....	10,214 miles
Reseeding.....	1,125,872 acres
Brush and Weed Control.....	951,819 acres
Pest Control (rodent & insect)	14,773,846 acres
Tree Planting.....	201,902 each
Corrals.....	521 each
Water Spreaders, Canals, and Ditches.....	781,786 lin. feet
Truck Trails.....	12,122 miles

Grazing district lands also supply approximately 1,172,000 animal unit months of forage which has been reserved by the BLM for the exclusive use of an estimated 723,700 big game animals including antelope, deer, elk, moose, and mountain sheep.²⁵ In addition, these lands serve as the habitat for large numbers of upland game birds and water fowl. Development of watering places on the federal range has provided for better distribution of big game animals and nesting places for birds. The many reservoirs also serve as resting places for migrating water fowl.

Fire control within grazing districts has made a creditable showing in reducing the number of fires reported annually by an estimated 30 percent and the number of acres burned over by approximately 60 percent since 1941. A major accomplishment is the reduction in the number of large fires and also the number of man-caused fires. Much forage, timber, and soil are represented in this saving.

There are still approximately 225,000 acres burned over annually, representing a loss of resources the nation can ill afford. The improving vegetative cover resulting from management and improvement programs creates an increasingly serious fire hazard. A more intensive

pre-suppression program, more and better equipment, and increased manpower are required to cope with this problem and to reduce the acreage burned over annually. Annual appropriations to cover costs of fire control have averaged approximately two mills per acre.

During fiscal years 1942-51, nearly five million acres of vacant, unreserved public lands were included in over 13,000 applications for entry under the Taylor Grazing Act. Of these lands over 65 percent were classified as being suitable for disposition. Applications for these lands were primarily for homestead, public sale, exchange, and desert land entries. In addition to the above classification of lands by the case method, over 7.9 million acres in the Missouri River Basin have been classified by the area classification method. Of these areas, approximately 4 1/2 percent were classified as suitable for disposition. The lands so disposed of have generally been placed to a higher use and in most instances the land pattern of the public lands has been improved, providing for better administration.²⁶

The advisory board system of the Bureau of Land Management deserves real credit for these accomplishments within grazing districts. The combined membership of these boards made up a vast wealth of knowledge of the range, much of which could not have been obtained elsewhere regardless of time or money.²⁷

When the regulations were being formed, their application was reviewed by the board members and changes suggested to make them more workable. With benefit of such advice the administrators were better able to weigh the

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Tables 57, 58, pp. 74, 75 and corresponding tables from this same report for the years 1942-50.

²⁷ Marion Clawson, *op. cit.*, pp. 248, 249, and 368-376.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Tables 77A, 77B, p. 98.

pros and cons of different administrative actions and select those which would obtain the desired results with least disturbance to the program. With such advice from the National Advisory Council on matters of a national scope, from the various state advisory boards on matters of state-wide concern, and on district-wide matters from the district advisory boards, better policies, regulations and administrative decisions undoubtedly resulted.

The wide variability in the character of the public ranges requires detailed knowledge of innumerable localized areas. Advisory boards with their widespread representation were able to supply this in accurate detail. Thus they were able to make wise recommendations on best locations of proposed range improvement and soil and moisture projects at considerable time and financial savings to the government.

They supplied substantially accurate estimates of the federal range's carrying capacity which were utilized until technical range surveys could be made. They advised who had made grazing use of the public lands, when and to what extent. This information, otherwise unavailable, was essential in determining the qualifications of base properties and the equitable distributions of grazing privileges.

Through their functions as Advisory Board members the stockmen became better informed of the purposes and administration of the program. Because of this, criticism and misunderstandings due to misinformation were largely eliminated.

Advisory Board members have become familiar with the operation of this segment of government and are outstanding examples of citizen participation in government—a great source of our nation's strength.

